

DATE: June 16, 1977

TO : To the file

FROM : J. Lederberg

SUBJECT: Telephone Conversation with Caryl Parker Moerdyke concerning E. L. Tatum

Caryl Parker is also acknowledged in the 1941 PNAS paper ("Genetic Control of Biochemical Reactions in Neurospora"). There was again some discrepancy about date, but that led me to go back to the journal and find that the first paper was communicated October 8, 1941 (not earlier, as I had been assuming). Her recollection was that she started to work as a technician in June 1941, just after she graduated as a Stanford undergraduate. At this point, the work was just getting underway, but apparently they had already isolated one mutant and were running down what its requirements were. She was doing all of the usual work on spore isolation, and so forth. Later on she worked on the penicillin project.

She was not able to tell me anything about the genesis of the discovery. They would talk together, but much of it was over her head at the time.

She thought that the Hungates would be the best lead, and perhaps also Adrian Srb.

She will look through her own attic to see if she has any papers, scrap books, etc. that might be helpful to this. She will also send me the address for Mildred Cady in San Jose, who was the secretary of the Biology Department at that time.

She was eager to cooperate and will be happy to communicate if she thinks of anything else.

As far as she knew she was the first 'flunky' or technical assistant working on the project.

P.S.

It is conceivable that there were reports to the Rockefeller Foundation that might tie down some of the dates.

Also recall that Hager was making a strong point that they had worked out the prospects theoretically, and were quite sure in advance what they would find when they did the experiment.

JL:ek-f

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Telephone # 322-3344